

Nov 25, last Sunday of Pentecost, Christ the King, 2007, year C, Psalm 46, Jeremiah 23:1-6, Colossians 1:11-20, Luke 19:29-38

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosannah!”

Can you imagine the crowd’s noise as Jesus rode into town ? There was a roar of cheering and shouting.

There was the frenzy of people tossing their cloaks down just ahead of the colt.

“KING” they shouted and called Jesus. “Hosannah!”

The crowd was swept away with excited, joyful emotion.

When we’re excited and joyful we’re apt to do things we might not otherwise do.

Maybe do some things which other, more cautious people, would judge to be “out of line”. Like this:

(blow soap bubbles)

That’s out of line. A foolish thing to do.

Blowing bubbles in church!...(blow soap bubbles)....from the pulpit! (blow bubbles again)

Out of line.

“Out of line”. That’s what the financial advisor told a **friend** of mine.

My friend had asked a financial advisor for advice on her budget and on her financial projections.

The advisor looked at my friend’s church pledge and said,

“That’s out of line. You ought to give a little less and be more in line with what the rest of us do.”

My friend didn’t pay any attention to the financial advisor. She was what the Apostle Paul called a “cheerful giver”. You remember that verse from 2 Corinthians: “God loves a cheerful giver”. (2 Cor 9:7)

However, the original Greek word Paul used was *hilarion*. Although the word *hilarion* has gotten translated as “cheerful”, *hilarion* **really** translates as *hilarious*!

So the correct translation is actually, “God loves an hilarious giver”.

Does that translation sound out of line to you?

An hilarious giver! A giver extravagant, perhaps, in her generosity related to her income, and delighted to be so.

Hilarious means boisterous, causing merriment, motivated by joyfulness.

The whole idea was certainly out of line to my friend’s financial advisor.

The advisor’s advice was “Stay IN line. Be careful. Be savvy. Don’t be foolish. Don’t be out of line.”

(blow bubbles)

But when we’re in love, we tend to be hilarious...we tend to be magnanimous and wonderfully out of line...generous because we feel abundantly good.

And that was my friend’s relationship with the Lord.

It was a love relationship, and it made her a generous giver and happy to be so.

An hilarious giver.

Out of line, according to the financial advisor.

Today is the last Sunday for emphasizing stewardship, and we’re asked to turn in our church pledges, if we haven’t already done so.

Today is also Christ the King Sunday.

You can certainly say Christ was out of line.

Look what he gave to us: his very life.

But even before that, the powerful political and religious people of his day thought Christ was out of line.

He **was** out of line... with the status quo.

He was a revolutionary.

He is **still** a revolutionary today.

He challenges our selfishness.

He stands against abuse of others and against ignoring the poor.

He stands against the selfish use of power.

He challenged religion which defined people as either IN or OUT according to religious codes.

His compassion undid the codes.

He forgave his **murderers**, saying "they know not what they are doing".

He was out of line.

Always he reached out to the poor,

To the suffering,

To the sinner,

To the needy,

To the outcast and the marginalized.

What kind of king **is** Christ to you?

He came as a baby, but a baby whom some recognized as King, as Messiah.

He died without even defending himself.

He didn't fit peoples' expectations.

He didn't become the political leader many of them wanted.

He didn't even stick with the "in" crowd.

He was out of line.

And he turned the world upside down. It has never been the same since.

He has become our **king**.

King of what?

"King of love", the hymn says.

Today's scripture reminds us that Christ is a king who rises above nationalism,

For **all** "thrones, rulers, powers, and dominions ...have been created through him and for him".

He is **pleased to reconcile** all things to himself...by "making peace through the blood of his cross".

Reconcile. Peace.

Does that fit the usual image of a powerful king? (Colossians 1;11-20)

The opening collect for today reminds us that it is God's will that through Christ all things be **restored...**

that it is God's will that **all** peoples of the earth be "freed and brought together under his most gracious rule".

This is not a king exclusive to one church denomination. He doesn't fit into the box of one denomination.

He's out of the box. He's out of any lines we try to draw around him.

He is out beyond human understanding.

King of all.

King over all.

King of love.

King of our hearts.

King who reconciles.

King who renews.

He has shown us what is good.

He has opened the way for us to live in the Kingdom of love, as part of a reality outside oneself.

Today's psalm praises God as our refuge and strength.

In Christ we find this refuge and strength.

Christ is the king to whom we turn when our world falls apart...

when it seems the earth is shifting under our feet and "mountains topple... into the sea", ...

when "waters rage" and "mountains tremble",...

when "nations make much ado and the kingdoms are shaken". (psalm 46)

Then we turn to what never changes and never leaves...to Christ the King.

When **your** world falls apart, ...**can** you “Be still, then, and know that (he is)...God”?

Can you enjoy the protection of being in Christ’s stronghold...of Christ being the King?

He takes you to him and greets you as his own.

And at the end of your days he will smile upon you and welcome you home.

For we are loved.

“The King of Love my shepherd is”. (hymn 646, *The Hymnal 1982*)

And with this sense of abundance, can you see who Christ is? The King?

Will you let him be king of your heart?

Can you be an hilarious giver?

Do you **want** to be an hilarious giver?

(blow soap bubbles)

Wouldn’t that be grand?